

OCTOBER 1956

# Christian News-Letter

**HOLY WORLDLINESS**

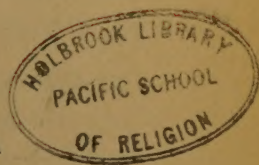
*Dr. Alec Vidler*

**CHRISTIAN FRONTIERS IN CHINA**

*Bishop K. H. Ting*

**THE CHRISTIAN POET TO-DAY**

*Norman Nicholson*



EDITED BY JOHN LAWRENCE

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# CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER

Editor: John Lawrence.

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# CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER

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## *From the Editor*

The General Secretary of the European "Coal and Steel Community" writes on another page of this issue that "imagination is applied love". Bishop Ting is expressing the same thought when he says that "to love the people . . . is to put ourselves in their position". Imagination is one of the conditions of success in all human affairs, conducting the iron and steel industries of Europe, in fixing wage rates, in all the relations of workers and employers, in international politics, indeed in all government, in all industry, in all commerce and in all learning, even in the compilation and still more in the use of statistics. Imaginative understanding is very close to love; and love is an imaginative faculty. In this sense love really does "make the world go round", and the absence of love is the direct cause of most of our troubles.

Colonel Nasser has set our foreign policy a difficult problem. We shall suffer grave injury if he gets away with the Suez Canal but it is not easy to find a cure which is not worse than the disease. His government has done some good to the Egyptian peasants whose misery has passed unnoticed in the row about Suez. If we were Egyptians we might well support Colonel Nasser on the ground that no other conceivable Egyptian government would have so much regard for the poor. An experienced Christian observer, who has recently been in the Middle East, writes: "My visit to Egypt convinced me that Nasser's government does mean business and may at possibly be able to forestall a Communist revolution. That is one of the reasons why I was so anxious that the British government should not try to force his downfall". Taking up this line of thought, Canon M. A. C. Warren has pointed out that "the Suez Canal episode may result in underdeveloped countries . . . being starved of capital investment from the West. . . . This risk, and not our standard of living, should be the preoccupation of Christians in the West". (M.S. NEWS-LETTER, October 1956.)



This does not at all excuse President Nasser's attitude to the rest of the world. But the problem of dealing with him cannot be solved by force unless we and the French are prepared to occupy not only the Suez Canal but the whole of Egypt and probably the whole Arab world, and not only to occupy it but to hold it down by force indefinitely. This raises both moral and practical issues. *The Observer*, which often speaks for informed Christian opinion, has pointed out that apart from Britain and France, "the other nations have all considered that the chief moral principle involved is our obligation to settle such a question without resort to force." But quite apart from moral propriety, does anyone think that a solution by force is politically possible? Can one doubt that the saboteurs would take every chance of setting fire to British-owned oil throughout the Arab World? Can one doubt that our troops would be continually sniped at by guerillas and murdered in dark streets from Baghdad to Benghazi? And can one doubt that this would become an issue at every general election and that before long any party which advocated evacuation of the Middle East would be in power?

I am not an habitual critic of the Foreign Office but on this occasion they seem to have foreseen nothing. They used no imagination. There are missionaries, journalists and business men who could have told the government that a show of force would unite the whole Arab world against us and that we might lose in a few weeks all our goodwill throughout Asia and half Africa. There are many good Christian men in the Foreign Office and in the Cabinet itself. How many of them see that the Christian duty to love our neighbours, and our enemies too, includes among many other things the imaginative understanding of Arab feelings? No doubt Colonel Nasser is unreasonable; he is cutting his nose off to spite his face. But that was easy to foresee. Nationalism is always apt to be unreasonable. And Persia has given recent proof, if proof is needed, that a country with a grievance is often blind to its material interests. Indeed the unreasonable element in national policy is often the one which attracts the strongest emotions and is therefore the most persistent.

It is not pleasant to be in the power of others but it is not an uncommon fate. We and the French would be wise to face the fact that we are no longer altogether our own masters. The powers that be are ordained of God. Interdependence is part of the divine order.

In the coming decades we may have to submit both to the joint will of the Americans and the Russians who are stronger than we and to the will of the Asians and Africans who are weaker but whose great numbers and strategic position will sometimes enable them to set their own way against us. We have no guarantee that others will be reasonable in their demands on us, but neither did Asia and Africa have any guarantee that we should be reasonable in the days of our domination. Personally I come of a family who have maintained a tradition of ethical imperialism and I do not disown my ancestry. I believe that in the main we used our power wisely and moderately but we cannot insist that the Indians, or the Egyptians or anyone else should agree with that judgment.

During the first Suez conference in London there was one moment when the Americans and the Russians seemed to combine against us and the French. It was only a fleeting moment, and they were combining to save us from our own folly; but it was not pleasant. It will take time for the two great powers to forget their cold war but it is objectively in their interest to establish a concert of power. And as the years pass we must expect the moments of Russo-American co-operation to become more frequent till perhaps co-operation may become a system. The Americans show every sign of using this power wisely and we may be reasonably sure that they will refuse to work with the Russians except in the interest of peace and stability. But the prospect of being in the power of two such blossoms may help us to understand what the Egyptians and others have felt about ourselves.

America and Russia will dominate the second half of this century, as we, the French, and the Spaniards have dominated previous centuries, but events are moving faster now and it may not be long before Russia and America in their turn are overtaken by the rising power of China and India. When that time comes we may be glad of our association in the Commonwealth with India and other rising nations. At present we are the senior partners in the Commonwealth but, if the Commonwealth lasts so long, a time will come when we shall be junior partners and India will be our senior.

### Uganda

The Commonwealth, as Pandit Nehru has said, has a touch of magic in it. With all its faults the British Commonwealth of Nations is the most promising model for relations between peoples



in the third millennium A.D. And one of its great merits is that it has demanded imagination as well as courage and patriotism from its makers. The great empire builders are poets in action. And the failures of empire and commonwealth are failures of imagination, failures to understand rather than failures of resolution or of efficiency. After the bitter recriminations of the Kabaka's exile, Sir Andrew Cohen's recapture of African confidence in Uganda is in the great tradition. But his successor, Sir Frederick Crawford, has not been given a fair chance. To give Uganda a governor from Kenya shows a lack of perception of psychological realities which flows from a lack of love. A correspondent in East Africa writes:

"...it would not matter if Crawford were the Archangel Gabriel. The sheer fact is that British policy in Kenya is deeply suspect to practically every African in Uganda; and the appointment of a governor with a Kenya background simply extends that suspicion to the Protectorate Government in Uganda. It does not pass notice that he has been in Northern Rhodesia, where federation is supposed to have been forced on unwilling Africans. It is by no means impossible that, after the achievement of self-government, members of other races will be welcomed into equal citizenship; but nothing except Russian methods can now prevent the development of Uganda as a "primarily African state", interpreted as meaning rule by the majority. The question is whether it shall come by agreement or by violence. It is interesting to note that the Uganda National Congress welcomes the appointment. They cannot fight Cohen's policy; they are certain they will be able to fight Crawford's".

### Dr. A. R. Vidler

On this occasion I am making my editorial notes shorter than usual in order to make room for an article on "Holy Worldliness" by Dr. Vidler, which is rather longer than is usual for the CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER. This article is the substance of an address given at the Church Union's Summer School of Sociology and it will form part of Dr. Vidler's new book "Essays in Liberality" which is to be published by the S.C.M. Press. It must not be assumed that the article on "Holy Worldliness" represents the author's complete view, when it appears in book form it will be balanced by other chapters bringing out other sides of the truth.

Alec Vidler, who has been for many years the secretary and chief executive officer of the Christian Frontier Council, is now leaving the amenities of a canonry at Windsor to become Dean of King's College, Cambridge. What Alec Vidler has given to the Christian Frontier Council will never be known outside a very small circle. His vigour and originality, his keen mind and vast learning are there for all to see; his hatred of cant, claptrap and religiosity helps to keep his friends on the right path even if it scandalises some of his acquaintances; but his deepest qualities are hidden by a "secret discipline" so effectively that their existence is often unsuspected. Dr. Vidler will continue to be associated with the Christian Frontier Council but it will be necessary to find a successor to the post of secretary to the Council, which is now taking the opportunity to review its plans for the future. We shall let our readers know as soon as a decision is taken.

J.W.L.

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## Holy Worldliness

A. R. VIDLER

The words "world" and "worldly" are in themselves morally neutral. As Newman said, "by the world is very commonly meant the present visible system of things, without taking into consideration whether it is good or bad". "Worldly," though it has acquired a predominantly pejorative sense, was originally synonymous with "mundane", and when a bridegroom says to a bride, "with all my worldly goods I thee endow" the word still bears this meaning. I must allow that according to the *New English Dictionary* the use of "worldliness" in a morally neutral sense is rare to the point of obsolescence, and this noun on Christian lips has nearly always a very unfavourable connotation. But I should like to be able to redeem it from monopolization by the devil. At least, I want to reflect upon the fact that the world was both created and redeemed in Christ. Since that is so, it should be possible and right to speak of a "holy" as well as of an "unholy" worldliness.

To avoid any initial misunderstanding I will try to indicate in a few words what "unholy worldliness" is, and then I trust you will



not suspect me of condoning it. There is no question in my mind that "unholy worldliness" is a very bad thing. But when we say that so-and-so is "worldly"—in a pejorative sense, what exactly do we, or what ought we to, mean? Or when we accuse *ourselves* of "worldliness"—which is doubtless a more salutary, though a less common exercise—which of our many deplorable proclivities ought we to have in mind? To be worldly in this bad sense is to conform uncritically and complacently to the standards and fashions that prevail in the earthly society of which one is inevitably a member. Cardinal Manning said that "a man who is trying to serve two masters is a worldly man", and worldly men may be said to try to serve both God and mammon, if in their time and place it is a social convention to acknowledge God as well as to serve mammon. It is to be supposed that they do not make much of a job of the service of God, and so the emphasis here should be placed upon the service of mammon.

Worldly men have their hearts set on the things of this world—for example, money, success, or power—and seek them not as means but as ends. Their treasure is on earth, and *not in heaven*: to the exclusion, that is, of any real reference to all that heaven signifies. To put it another way, worldly men not only "belong" here—in this world, which in my view is a good thing to do; but they do not belong anywhere else. They are not held or haunted by anything beyond "the present visible system of things". They have no sense of *another* world on the threshold of which the men of this world are always living. There is in their estimation (whatever conventional professions they may make) no unseen realm of mystery with a weight of glory—or at least heavy with enigmas. It has been said of Herbert Spencer that he "was *not* an otherworldly man. Poetry, mystery, imagination, played no part whatever in his life". Exactly. All the investments of worldly men, whether for themselves or for other people, are in what is tangible, and they are always either rationally or instinctively calculating where these tangible interests lie.

"Those who (thus) love the world, those who surrender themselves to it", as F. D. Maurice said, "never understand it, never in the best sense enjoy it; they are too much on the level of it—yes, too much below the level of it . . . to be capable of contemplating it and of appreciating what is most exquisite in it. . . . The world . . . , though altogether good to the man who refers it to a Father, is the provocative of all evil in him when it becomes separated from his Father, and substituted for Him".



But I hardly need to say more about "unholy worldliness". Unless you live on quite a different plane from that which I inhabit, you know all too well what it is in yourself. I do not want in any way to mitigate the severity with which we judge ourselves in this regard. On the other hand, I do not want our just reprobation of unholy worldliness to blind us to our vocation to holy worldliness.

Perhaps we should seek to be at least approximately agreed about what we mean by "the world". In the Bible, in ecclesiastical parlance, and in general usage, this word "the world" bears a tiresome variety of meanings and shades of meaning. Sometimes the meaning is determined by that with which "the world" is contrasted. I possess, or used to possess, a book entitled *Twelve Years in a Monastery*, by Joseph McCabe, and it might be said that after those twelve years he returned to the world. Here the meaning is plain enough; living outside the cloister is contrasted with living inside. But at other times when the world is contrasted with something else the meaning is far from plain. "The church" and "the world" are often contrasted or correlated, and in this case I am seldom happy about what is meant or implied. For it often seems to be implied that the church is quite separable or distinguishable from the world, or that it is a section or corner of the world which is in the light in contrast to the rest which is in the dark.

If I were myself going to speak in such terms, I should wish to say that the church and the world are at least coterminous or that the world is that part of the church that has not yet come to its right mind. Père de Lubac, speaking of the Fathers of the Church, has pointed out that "however far their gaze travelled, they could discern the *Corpus Ecclesiae* already in process of formation. For them, in fact, in a certain sense the Church was nothing else than the human race itself, in all the phases of its history, in so far as it was to lead Christ and be quickened by his Spirit". Similarly, Maurice said that the Church . . . is a witness to all mankind of what God has done for them, and what they really are, created in Christ, and redeemed by Christ, and capable, but for their disbelieving this truth, and not knowing their position as members of his body, of shewing forth his character and his glory."

However, I do not wish to steer you into a consideration of philosophical niceties, and I will content myself with endeavouring to specify positively what I mean by "the world" in the present context. I mean when by "the world" not only all that is visible and tangible, all the

physical and psychic vitalities—what is commonly called by conjunction of two multiguous words “the world of nature”—but also the world of culture or of civilization, that is, all that is specifically human, the works of intelligence and imagination (science and the arts), industry and agriculture, and all social and political institutions.

The question is sometimes posed whether by the Christian faith we are committed to renouncing or to affirming the world. Of course, by the world is meant all that I have just named, it is impossible to renounce it absolutely and to go on living. World-renunciation must mean that we should be as lightly as possible attached to the things of the world and especially that we should eschew its pleasures. It is said of Sir James Stephen (Leslie Stephen's father) that he “was inexorably suspicious of pleasure. He drank little; ate the lightest of meals; and asking himself once why it was that he continued to take snuff and receiving no satisfactory reply, ceremoniously emptied the box out of the window. ‘He once smoked a cigar’, Leslie tells us, ‘and found it so delicious that he never smoked again.’” Is that a disposition towards the things of the world which we ought to regard as exemplary? Or, on the contrary, should we endorse the Jewish saying that “a man will have to give account on the judgment-day of every good thing which he has refused to enjoy when he might have done so”?

We must face the fact that at the most solemn moment in our lives (though most of us were unaware of it) we were pledged, apparently without qualification, “to fight against . . . the world”. Yes, but the expression must be interpreted in the light of others in the Book of Common Prayer, where it is said that we are to renounce not the world as such but “the vain pomp and glory of the world with all covetous desires of the same” (baptism service) or “the pomps and vanities of this wicked world” (1928 confirmation service). That is to say, the world is here regarded as a system that is set up as a substitute for God, and to whose specious charms it is easy to become enslaved. What we are to renounce, as we are to renounce the devil and all his works, is what I call unholy worldliness.

What I am going to maintain is that our right relation to the world cannot be adequately covered by the formulas either of world-renunciation or of world-affirmation. Our right relation to the world is more involved than that: it can only be brought out—if I may use a term of which I am not too fond—dialectically, that is by saying Yes and No: indeed, by saying Yes and No and then Yes

again. If I now proceed to say what I want to say in the form of a thesis, an antithesis and a synthesis, it is only because this suggests itself as a convenient framework and not because I have any further sense of indebtedness to that great and good man Professor Hegel with whose writings I am extremely ill acquainted and, so far as I can see, likely to remain so!

First, then, the *thesis* is that God made the world—both the world of nature and the world of culture. Of the world of nature it is said that he saw it was good: could it receive a stronger preliminary affirmation than that? The world of culture is from the outset of the Bible treated more ambiguously. God made man with his powers of creating culture and evidently intended those powers to be used and developed; but the fact that in Genesis the discovery of the various arts and technics is ascribed to the descendants of Cain may be taken as a sign of how readily they lend themselves to abuse and of how generally they have in fact been abused since the dawn of history. Still, the important point here is that according to the Old Testament mankind, and God's chosen people in particular, are called to serve him in the life of this world and not merely to use this world as a ready place of preparation for a life or world to come. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof", and we are meant so to regard it. Solomon in all his glory really was glorious—and is glorious. The men of the Old Testament would have protested as strongly as Mrs. Margaret Knight did against a statement made recently by Mr. Christopher Hollis in *The Observer*: "It is not the fundamental concern of religion to bring order or civilisation to this world. Its fundamental concern is not with life but with death." Equally we may say the men of the Old Testament would have sympathized with Stewart Headlam when he said that a sermon by Dr. Pusey to Cambridge undergraduates on the imminence of death was incessantly tedious. We must all have noticed how hard and how ingeniously Christian divines have to work in order to find in the Old Testament even premonitions of a life, worthy of the name, beyond the grave, and we know that the doctrine of resurrection was a very late importation into Judaism.

Again, it is an awkward fact for Christian sectaries, and for those churchmen who now want to sever the traditional nexus between civil and ecclesiastical society, that in the Old Testament not only is there a separation between church and state but no clear line is drawn between what some call the "religious" and the "secular" orders. I



say it *is* an awkward fact for the sectarian-minded: but perhaps should say that they would find it awkward, were it not that they lightly skip over the testimony of the Old Testament and endeavour to found a norm for the relations between church and society in the abnormalities of the New Testament.

I would suggest that the thesis of the Bible with regard to the life of this world—its primary and unsophisticated affirmation of the world—is beautifully exemplified in David whom we may take here as a paradigmatic figure. David in whom the physical and psychic vitalities are conspicuously present: David who was at once shepherd and psalmist and king: David who fought when it was necessary, with all his might, against powerful animals and powerful men; David who danced, with all his might, before the Ark of God: David the epic friend and the epic lover and the epic father (O Absalom, my son my son): David the poet laureate and the beloved commander who would not drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem, for which he had longed, but poured it out unto the Lord: David who never lost his tenderness and *joie de vivre* though he had to cope with tough men like Joab: David whose soul “was bound in the bundle of life with the Lord his God” and who was “the man after God’s own heart”.

So much at present for the thesis: now for the *antithesis*. Though the Old Testament is strikingly world-affirming, and exhibits God’s interest, as well as man’s, in everything to do with the life of the world, yet from the beginning it leaves us in no doubt that a dark shadow lies across the world. This world never has been the Paradise it might have been. Man’s power to love, which is his most godlike capacity, with fatal ease degenerates into lust. His power to build which represents his call to share in the work of the Creator, all too quickly produces towers of Babel. Cities and civic life with their splendid possibilities of culture and community often share, and deserve to share, the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah and of Babylon. The time came when the house of David itself, which began with such high promise, was found to be in ruins (see Amos 9, 11). The fierce judgments of God upon the abuse by mankind, and by his chosen people in particular, of the sublime worldly powers and possibilities which he had entrusted to them, was declared again and again by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been since the world began. And as we approach the horizon of the Old Testament these prophetic denunciations, which were however usually attended by promises of a better world and of a better worldliness beyond the impending doom

give way to the bizarre visions of apocalyptic in which the final dissolution of this world is predicted and portrayed.

The denunciation and the renunciation of the world culminates, however, not in an apocalypticist but in the return of Elijah—in John the Baptist. If David is the paradigmatic representative of the primary Yes that the Bible says to the world, John the Baptist is the paradigmatic representative of the No that must always be said in the next breath. You will see what I mean if I quote a passage from F. W. Robertson's sermon on "The Word and the World":

"It was John's lot to be born into the world in a period of highly-advanced society; and in that hot-bed of life-fictions, Jerusalem, the ardent mind of the young man found nothing to satisfy the cravings of its desire. He wanted something deeper and truer than the existing systems could afford him. He went to the Sadducee and the Pharisee in vain. He found no life in the Jewish ritual—no assistance from the Rabbis. He went into the wilderness to commune with God, to try what was to be learned from Him by a soul in earnest, without church, ministers, or ordinances. The heavens spoke to him of purity, and the river by his side of God's eternity. Locusts and honey, his only food, taught him that man has a higher life to nourish than that which is sustained by epicurean luxuries. So disciplined John came back to his countrymen. As might be expected, no elaborate theology formed any part of his teaching. 'We want a simpler, purer, austerer life. Let men be real. Fruits worthy of repentance, fruits, fruits, not profession. A new life. Repent.' That was the burden of John's message."

The austere figure of John the world-renouncer is for ever embedded hard by the centre of the Gospel—hard by the Incarnate Lord himself. He is the essential Forerunner of the world's Redeemer and of the world's redemption. His message had not only once upon a time but has always to prepare the way for the message of the Christ. I shall return to this point later.

But to come now to what for convenience I call the *synthesis*. When the Christ came, he accepted the baptism of John and so gave permanent endorsement to his mission and his message. But the Christ himself was not a world-renouncer after the Baptist's example. Where John came neither eating nor drinking, he came both eating and drinking and was charged with gluttony and winebibbing. The Christ came not wailing but piping so that not only that generation but all generations might dance. But we must not simplify matters here.

In the Christ and his Holy Spirit, who are one and whose work is one, the thesis, the antithesis and the synthesis are incarnate. First, there is his Yes to the worlds of nature and culture, to the physical

and psychic and social vitalities. The very fact of his becoming flesh and his birth into the world, constitutes an ineffaceable signature, and the Gospels are the dictionary of the Christ's elemental and articulated affirmation of the world. I need only quote a few sentences from Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*.

"The beauty and charm of the visible world appealed to Him (Mt. vi, 26, 28). Its incidents furnished illustrations for His sermon (Mark iv, 3; Mt. xxv, 14). He participated in its festivals (Jn. ii, 1ff.) and contrasted Himself with one whose asceticism disparaged its good cheer (Mt. ii, 18f.). Again, the claims of this world's lawful authorities always received His ready acknowledgement. . . . (Mk. xii, 17; Mt. xvii, 27). Further in His thought the welfare of men is by no means a merely spiritual matter . . . Christ calls His followers not to neglect the temporal world, much less to despise it, but to recognize that they have a function to fulfil in it by permeating every part of it with life with beauty and truth" (Mt. v, 13-16; xiii, 33; Jn. xvii, 15).

But to say no more than that would be like stopping short at the Galilean idyll. On any count, the Christ of the Gospels is not a simple world-affirmer. No doubt he identified himself with the world and its activities and consecrated its delights by participating in them. Indeed he so identified himself with the original creation and so absorbed into himself the poisons by which it had been defaced, that he became the author and head of the new creation and of a restored world. As Father Thornton has said: "In becoming 'flesh' the Word made himself one with 'all flesh', that is, with all creaturely life in this world of his creation. He who is in the bosom of the Father, he who himself holds this living cosmos in his embrace, having penetrated to its heart became its offspring . . . When the Creator thus entered into his creation and identified himself with it, he became its 'Head' in a new sense."

He identified himself with a world that had become alienated from God, and in so doing reconciled it to God. In the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer:

"That God loved the world and reconciled it with himself in Christ is the central message proclaimed in the New Testament. It is assumed there that the world stands in need of reconciliation with God but that it isn't capable of achieving it by itself. The acceptance of the world by God is a miracle of the divine compassion. . . .

"In the body of Jesus Christ God took upon himself the sin of the whole world and bore it. There is no part of the world, be it never so forlorn and never so godless, which is not accepted by God and reconciled with God in Jesus Christ. Whoever sets eyes on the body of Jesus Christ in faith can never again speak of the world as though it



were lost, as though it were separated from Christ; he can never again with clerical arrogance set himself apart from the world. The world belongs to Christ."

This is the theological presupposition of what I call "holy worldliness". As Bonhoeffer says elsewhere: "A life in genuine worldliness is possible only through the proclamation of Christ crucified." Through Christ's self-identification with the world in its forlornness and its dereliction, and through his having become its suffering servant, it has become endowed again with the limitless possibilities of the original creation—even at those points or in those areas where it still looks most forlorn. For this reason the mystical Body of Christ, the community of his Holy Spirit, the Church, rightly seeks to identify itself with the whole life of the world and to serve it—instead of standing aloof or apart. The true church refuses to respond to the puritan or sectarian admonition to come out of the accursed city and be a community as separate as possible from the world.

Certainly, the church in identifying itself with the world and serving it has needed and always will need puritan admonitions and the recurrent raising of John the Baptist from the dead, for in its identification with the world the church is exposed to many temptations: the temptation to lord it over the world instead of to serve it—the temptation to confound the Yes of the synthesis with the Yes of the thesis and to avoid the disciplines and ordeals of the antithesis—the temptation to forget the difference between affirming the world for its own sake and affirming it because of the mystery of its reconciliation and restoration in the Christ—or, if you like, the temptation to become blind to the difference between holy and unholy worldliness.

Holy worldliness will be the outcome of a constantly renewed Yes and No and Yes again to the world. All three movements or emphases—thesis, antithesis, synthesis—have their part to play in Christian sanctification and in Christian education. Let me try to illustrate what I mean, both negatively and positively, with some gleanings from the literature of holy worldliness.

The education of children should begin with the thesis—with an elemental Yes to the world, not with prematurely imposing the antithesis upon their unready minds. They should learn to live in the atmosphere of the Old Testament before being introduced to the New. David should be their hero, before they are sent up to John the Baptist and then to the Son of David who was David's Lord. There is a relevant passage in Emmanuel Mounier's *The Spoil of the Violent*:

"Instead of being confronted from the very start with the who sweep of the landscape of love, the young Christian is, eight times of ten, first subjected to a powerful injection of 'moraline', and the first watchword of the moralist campaign is mistrust, caution: mistrust of the instincts and struggle against the passions. The first sentiment we inculcate in that being whom we are concerned to make into an example of moral health and a passionate lover of the infinite, is fear of the force which should serve as the root of his spiritual growth. . . . Whoever spends his youth restraining, repressing and repelling, can respond to life only with gestures of negation and withdrawal; initiative and creativeness, like love, spring only from interior attitudes of generous openness. In all this we have the origin of that dreary and somewhat stupid sadness that one often sees on the faces of those entering and leaving churches and chapels."

By way of contrast, mark some words of Lady Violet Bonham Carter describing her youth, which I would apply more widely than she intended: "Up went the curtain on the world. And what a world I loved it at first sight—and plunged into it head foremost. There was no ice to break—the water was warm—and I was swimming." That is how it should be to begin with, and this is an experience that should periodically come to us all afresh on the way to Christian sanctification. Anyhow, this is the first wholesome initiation into a holy worldliness, and blessed are those who are thus baptized into the world.

But, secondly, woe unto those who are never baptized into anything else. Woe unto those who never go on to discover and to face the strangeness of the world, the chill and the homelessness of its present condition, and who do not perceive its power to seduce and degrade those who just take what it offers and who never learn to say No to it.

Mind you, I am not joining in the chorus of ecclesiastics which is always turning on a dirge about the materialism, the paganism, the self-indulgence, of contemporary man. It is not clear to me that it is on world-renunciation that contemporary man falls down, or that lack of self-discipline is the cause of his paleness. I should like to be more confident than I am that contemporary man is affirming the world with zest and with all his might. Geoffrey Gorer says that when he was going through the answers to his questionnaire (which, like you, he calls a "questionnaire"), in preparation for his book *Exploring English Character*, he found himself constantly making the same notes: first, "What dull lives most of these people appear to lead!", and secondly, "What good people!" I suspect that there is plenty of world-renunciation in the conduct of modern man, though to his loss.

it is not interpreted as such. There is the extraordinary collective ascetism of our society—the clocking in, the commuting, the tax-paying, the heroic fortitude of the queues, the great discovery that *men* can and should and do wash up. Our pastors and spiritual directors might help us to relate all this to the paradigmatic figure of John the Baptist, instead of thinking up some fresh little bits of religiosity for us.

Whether or not there is a clue to anything there, we can lay it down that only those who have been brought to the Baptism of John can go on to receive the Baptism of the Spirit. Here again, F. W. Robertson says what I want to say:

“It is a matter of no small importance that the baptism of John should precede the baptism of Christ; that is, a strict life, scrupulous regularity, abhorrence of evil—perhaps even something too austere, the usual accompaniment of sincerity at the outset—should go before the peace which comes of faith in Christ. First the blade, *then* the ear, then the full corn in the ear. You cannot have the harvest first. There is an order in the development of the soul as there is in the development of the year of nature, and it is not safe to *force*. Nearly two thousand years were spent in the Divine government in teaching the Jews the meaning of holiness, the separation of right from wrong. And such must be the order of the education of children and of men. The Baptism of Repentance before the Baptism of the Spirit.”

This Baptism of Repentance is not a thing that is received once and for all and is then left behind. The Christian Year contains its own reminders that it has to be received again and again; though even at such times, lest we should become too unworldly, we are especially encouraged to sing the *Benedicite*.

The Christian Year has indeed abundant reminders that what has been renounced is also given back. “All things are yours,” so the New Testament declares. But all things cannot now be just taken and enjoyed as they were to be at first. Holy worldliness is the working out in practice of a dialectical relation to the world and to all things that are therein. Emmanuel Mounier puts it thus:

“The duty of incarnation, if we were faithful to the meaning of the word, would oblige us to maintain simultaneously, at each moment of time, the most completely contradictory-to-good-sense positions; to die to the world, even while we committed ourselves to it; to deny the everyday, and to save it; to sorrow over our sins, and to rejoice in the new man; to reckon of value only what is inward, but to spread ourselves abroad throughout nature in order to conquer the whole of life for inwardness; to recognize in ourselves the dependence of a nothing and the liberty of a king. . . .”



Dietrich Bonhoeffer was, so it seems to me, saying much the same thing when he talked about "religionless Christianity". "It is only," he said, "by living completely in this world that one learns to believe . . . This is what I mean by 'worldliness'—taking life in one's stride with all its duties and problems, its successes and failures, its experiences and helplessness. It is in such a life that we throw ourselves utterly in the arms of God and participate in his sufferings in the world and watch with Christ in Gethsemane . . ."

I should say that Mounier is describing holy worldliness when he speaks of "a Christianity of the open air", and contrasts it with what the bourgeoisie have turned Christianity into.

"The bourgeois house is a shuttered house, the bourgeois heart, a heart circumspect and cautious. The bourgeois would like to turn the catholic, apostolic Church into the back parlour of a shop, a confidential salon where anaemic virtues stagnated in a curtained half-light, ignorant of everything unconnected with ecclesiastical gossip, the troubles of a pious clique and the sterile confidences of lonely lives. The average devout catholic of one of our small towns carries his universe in his pocket. You must look elsewhere for the stage of the great elementary dramas of our time."

A friend, with whom I had been recently discussing the subject, wrote to me afterwards as follows:

"I believe that far too many of us resort to a *world-evading* type of religion through sheer cowardice. We cannot face either the tensions or the risks of trying to be in the world and not of it. So we busy ourselves with so-called religious activities—and become Holy Joes, pious women and what have you, devoting more and more time to 'religious' activities—including not only retreats but missions to win others to . . . the practice of the same escapist and pietistic habits. The vicious circle once formed it becomes harder and harder to break."

Certainly, there will be great risks in a Christianity of genuine worldliness: for it means living in the open air; it means living with men and serving them in all those areas where Christ is never named though they belong to him, or where he is named only to be misunderstood or reviled. Christians who carry their faith out there will need to be sustained by a secret discipline such as that of which Bonhoeffer spoke, but above all they will need to be sustained by belief in the Holy Ghost and in the working of the Holy Ghost in the whole world and in all flesh.

Therefore I will conclude with a profession of faith in the Holy Ghost which I take from F. D. Maurice's little-known book *The Conflict of Good and Evil*:

"I believe in a Spirit who is at work on the inner life of human society, who is contending with all that makes it brutal or effeminate, slavish or anarchical. I believe in a Spirit who is not content with the semblances of civility and manliness, of freedom or order, who seeks to deliver us from whatever makes us ungracious to each other, cowardly in our resolutions and acts, from whatever leads us to crouch to any tyrant, or to set up any form of self-will in our own hearts. I believe in a Spirit who can never be satisfied till He awakens real energies: till those energies bring forth fruit in action. I believe in a Spirit who carries on continuously a conflict with the sloth and feebleness in me and in my fellow-creatures: who will give them and me no rest till He casts out from us the devils of sloth and feebleness."

Such a faith in the working of the Holy Ghost in the world joins hands with the superb prayer with which *The Spoil of the Violent* ends: "Then let the sail be bent to the main-mast, and let the ship of the Faith, issuing out from the harbour where it lies rotting at anchor, sail before the wind towards the furthest star, indifferent to the darkness around it."

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## Christians and the Future of Europe

MAX KOHNSTAMM

*Max Kohnstamm is General Secretary of the European "Coal and Steel Community" set up under the Schumann Plan with headquarters in Luxemburg. He is a Dutchman. The article which follows is the substance of a talk given at a meeting of the Christian Frontier Council.*

At the end of the war in 1945, although the liberated countries were very glad to get back their national institutions, it was clear that these were not capable of solving the problems of the day. However, at that time there was nothing else to turn to, and they had to face reconstruction through these institutions. Underlying this there was a very strong feeling that the structure had to be changed; but for the time it was necessary to work with the instruments to hand.

After these first years of reconstruction on the old basis a new phase of international co-operation followed. Slowly, through the economic and political developments of the years from 1947-50, it dawned upon the continental nations that this approach of international co-operation would not go far enough. So it became possible

for the French Government to come forward with an entirely new concept, the supra-national concept which was embodied in the Coal and Steel Community. The proposals made by the French Government in May 1950 dealing with coal and steel had a further goal; they wanted by this process of supra-national co-operation to change the structure of political and economic life.

To what extent has the Schumann Plan begun to change not only the exchange and the flow of goods crossing the borders, but the very structures themselves? Politically, what is the difference between a group of nations coming together as our nations do in NATO and O.E.E.C.,\* discussing problems, and trying to find solutions, and the work done in Luxemburg, where the people responsible for the decisions do not come under instructions from national governments but are responsible to a new community? The important thing is the bringing together of people and giving them a responsibility towards the new community. People often ask whether it is really true that these nine men who form the High Authority and have to take the responsibility for this common market in the interest of this community of six nations really act differently and not as Germans or Dutchmen or Frenchmen. The men are no different from other men; the work is done by normal people such as you would find anywhere in governments or civil services.

But it is very noticeable in human life that responsibility changes a man. During the nineteenth century a succession of people were sent out from the Netherlands as Governor-General of the East Indies, and those chosen were naturally traditionally conservative people who loved their country and went out to defend her interests, but it always happened that after a few months of life in a new part of the world their outlook changed and it was not long before they came into serious trouble with the Minister of Colonial Affairs, who remained in the Hague and was looking at things from a different angle. In the same way, people who previously defended their national interests, coming to Luxemburg and being faced with a common responsibility, begin to react differently—as Europeans, and this means putting the interest of the whole before the interest of the component parts. It is easy to say that we must be Europeans, but you can only seriously be what your responsibilities make you. A minister carrying out negotiations who does not defend the interests of his country is wrong.

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\* North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and Organisation for European Economic Co-operation



because the responsibility given to him is to defend his national interests and he has to explain his acts before a national parliament. In Luxemburg, an executive having responsibility for the Community, responds to that new responsibility and can come to decisions which would be impossible for people holding only a national mandate.

Economically also the aim is not only to obtain an increase in the exchange of goods across the national borders; the main thing is that the structure of the European economy is changing. There is so far greater stability of prices and investment is increasing. During the four years in which the Coal and Steel Community has been in existence there has been a generally favourable economic climate, but there has also been a period of recess. In spite of this, investments in the heavy industries have gone on to an increasing extent—a thing which has never happened before and which shows the change in the structure of the economic system. The reason is this: normally in times of recess, industries often seek and find in their governments a defence against the inflow of goods from other countries. But knowing that in the common market that would be impossible they were forced to go on with the mechanization of their industry. So in this way the heavy industries acted as a stabilizing factor during 1953-54, at a time when industrial activity decreased on the continent.

Here is a further example of the changing structure. In France there has been a group of industries in the centre of the country composed of very small units and not on the scale required by the modern steel industry. From 1945 there has been strong pressure from the French Government for them to concentrate and modernize, but this did not take place. Every one of these industries had, under French cartel rules, a completely secure outlet for its products even though they were produced under antiquated conditions; so they were not forced to change. But very soon after the coming into existence of a common market, when produce from other countries began to flow into France, this concentration took place as the result of increased competition, and led to a much more economic means of production.

Here is yet another example. A leading man in the Dutch blast furnaces told me that they have always considered certain parts of France's sea coast as their natural territory for selling their products, but in the past they have never been able to build up a sales organization in that area because they knew that once they got a foothold, political action would be taken against the inflow of products and they would be thrown out again. But under the Coal and Steel

Community they have built up a sales organization in France and are able to enter that territory with their materials.

There is more than one lesson to be learnt from the working of the Coal and Steel Community. First, we have learnt to see the difference between "integration" and "liberalization of trade". Through O.E.E.C. there has been an important liberalization of trade between most of our countries; which means that to a very large extent it has been possible to do away in Europe with the quantitative restrictions which were in force after the end of the war. But integration means not only doing away with quantitative restrictions and tariffs, but at the same time setting up rules which are necessary in the modern world to make a constant flow of trade possible. The Coal and Steel Community have installed a fair trade code, which includes the obligation for the High Authority to operate an anti-cartel law, and to do away with discrimination in transport and pricing. The most important part of the work of the Coal and Steel Community is only possible because it not only takes negative action such as doing away with tariffs, but it also gives to its executive the possibility of doing what is necessary in modern life; policing the common market; seeing that government could not break up this common market by the manipulation of transport rates and giving new subsidies to the industry in hidden forms.

The second thing which can be learnt from our experience is the necessity for permanency. If consumers and producers are not absolutely sure that what is happening is permanent, they will not allow these changes to come about. The Belgium Government, for example, has for years subsidized parts of the Belgium mining industry which are in a bad geological situation and where the mining is carried on under antiquated conditions and prices are high. But if the government had allowed certain mines to be closed they would have become more dependent on outside supplies, which could not be relied on. Great Britain, when there was a shortage of coal, cut off exporting to countries who had for many years depended on her for supply. Only now, when they know that the Belgium consumer will get the same treatment from the French or German coal producer as a national consumer, has the Belgium Government taken the steps necessary to put the Belgium coal industry into a healthy condition.

Another lesson which can be learnt from the Luxemburg experiment is that measures of transition are absolutely necessary. Even when people are willing to accept a change they want a guarantee that the

results of the change will not be too sudden. It is necessary to give a certain number of guarantees to all those who are active in the economy of a country; consumers, producers and labour. Labour wants to know that if in the interest of the Community as a whole change is to take place in a certain branch of industry—and to labour change too often means at least temporary unemployment—the workers in this industry in one country will not be left to face the burden alone. Change is accepted provided those who suffer in the first instance are helped by the Community as a whole to face the changes necessary. The consumer is also willing and eager to change if it is more economical to buy from an outside producer, provided he is guaranteed by non-discrimination measures and a fair trade code that he cannot be cut off from his sources of supply. And the producer, who no longer can turn to help from his national authority in times of economic recess, must know that there is a new authority to which he can turn if things become too difficult.

The hope has been that the general scheme followed by the Schumann Plan—the fusion of national sovereignty—would be applied in other forms, e.g. the European Defence Community. Since the E.D.C. was voted down in the French Parliament new plans have been made in the economic field to carry on and to round off the work which was begun by the Schumann Plan; amongst others in the field of atomic energy. Of course these plans are not unopposed even in the six countries concerned. Different opinions are possible as regards the technical merits of these rather complicated forms of international co-operation. I feel very strongly that the groups who are holding out a hope for the future, who are thinking about a responsible society, who are not harking back to the past, who believe that Europe still has a task to fulfil in the world, are closely connected and linked up with the groups who are pushing for European integration.

If these groups should "lose out", I do not see where else Britain, for example, can turn to find allies for a forward-looking, peace-loving, western policy (a policy which sees to what extent freedom is a good that has to be defended in this world). I cannot be blind to the fact that the groups who founded this first experiment together and are pushing for other experiments of the same kind are fighting a difficult battle. It is perhaps less difficult in the Benelux countries than in others because public opinion is still in favour of that kind of thing, but to a large extent in France and Germany the situation is different. France is completely taken up for the moment with her



battle in North Africa, and her eyes are taken away from the necessity of building European unity and of finding new ways of living together with her neighbours. The situation in North Africa is extremely serious, and if France were to be defeated there, democracy would receive a serious shock. The sort of government which would follow a defeat in North Africa is unpredictable but might well be an anti-democratic, anti-western government. Even today those who demonstrate in the streets of Paris or Tunis do it under banners reading "Algeria is French. Away with the Americans"! The danger in France is a new nationalism linked up with neutralism. People in this country have suggested that if that should happen the only way to avoid tragedy would be for England to strengthen its bilateral tie with Germany. That is not a realistic solution. Germany, where certain national and neutralist powers are also gaining force, could not long remain loyal to the West if faced on one border by Russia and on the other by a nationalist and neutralist France. Those groups who are fighting for a new way of living together on the Continent of Europe and a new economic structure capable of giving to the people of Europe the fulfilment of the promises which are inherent in the technological knowledge of today, are fighting a hard battle and are faced by graver dangers than at any time since the fight began. The outcome of this struggle will deeply influence the future of Britain.

I ask whether Britain is putting to this problem all the imagination of which she is capable. The word "imagination" is very dear to me as it seems to be the same thing as the simple Christian concept of brotherly love; imagination is applied love; imagination is finding by your love those deeds or words which help your neighbour. So I would put the question: "Confronted by the situation which I have tried to sketch for you, is the contribution which England is giving to solve our problems, the utmost contribution she can give?"

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

*The third impression of PATERNOSTER, a meditation on the Lord's Prayer first published as a supplement to the CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER in January 1941, is available from "The Christian Frontier", 8 The Cloisters, Windlesham Castle. Single copies, 3d. each; 2s. per dozen, post free.*

*PATERNOSTER is "an attempt to translate into words of prayer some of the thought which has found expression in the News-Letter".*

C.N-L. No. 62

# Christian Frontiers in China

K. H. TING

*The substance of a talk given at a Frontier Luncheon*

*The Rt. Revd. K. H. Ting, Bishop of Chekiang, has many friends in the West, having served for some years on the staff of the World Student Christian Federation and his recent visit to this country made it possible to renew many of these friendships. Since Bishop Ting's integrity has been called in question in some quarters, I wish to say that those who know him best have the greatest confidence in his integrity and spirituality. But it may well be that the truth about Christianity in China has other aspects to which Bishop Ting did not refer while he was here. In particular the Church of Rome is always particularly exposed in Communist countries on account of the close links between the local hierarchy and the Roman Curia, which is regarded as a foreign government.*

J. W. L.

First of all I must say how grateful I am to God for having given me this opportunity to meet with our Christian friends in England.

From my past experience of visiting Christians in other countries I know that the Church in China, perhaps more than many other Churches, has been very much in the prayers of Christians in the West, and I understand that even during the last few years, when you did not get much news of the Church in China, many of the Christians in Western countries have not ceased to pray for Christians in China. Of course the prayers of many Western Christians for the Church in China during the last few years have been offered with heaviness of heart, with some unwarranted fears and worries owing to misinformation. But I believe that God goes deeper than the words of your prayers and knows the earnestness of heart behind your words, and therefore the blessings that God has given to the Church in China during the last few years are at least partly a result of the prayers of our Christian friends in the West. And today I am most grateful that we can have this opportunity to meet face to face, and I am sure that after this contact your prayers can be more informed and you will also offer your thanksgivings on our behalf.

I shall dwell on five aspects or five frontiers of the Church in China: the relationship of the Church in China with God; its relation-

ship with the people of China; the relationship of the Churches with each other; the relationship of the Church with the State; and the relationship of the Church with Churches abroad.

First, the relationship of the Church in China with God. During the last few years I think the most important experience of the Christians in China is something about which Pascal said many years ago: "It is a blessed state for the Church to be dependent on God alone". That probably summarizes a very important aspect of our experience. When the People's Government of China was established in 1949, many Christians in China were not prepared for the new situation. Especially after the decision of the U.S. Government to freeze the financial assets in China, many of our Churches were in great difficulty and many Christians were confused and did not know what to think. Yet the whole environment was very conducive to an existential kind of thinking. For us the establishment of the People's Government or the Liberation is not just a political or diplomatic accident; it is not a *coup d'état* or the succession of one dynasty or one government by another; it is a very important jump in history, a turning point in our history which was long overdue and which could not be reversed.

In this new circumstance vague Christianity was of very little help. In the old days we could have a vague Christianity without noticing it. Christianity could be like a broken compass; for us to possess it was not any real asset and for us not to possess it was not much of a loss. But in New China vague Christianity was of no avail. Circumstances forced Christians to ask themselves: "Whom do we serve and in what do we put our hope?" The liberalism, the moralism and the rationalism of the social gospel, of which we had plenty in China, could not satisfy the spiritual needs of the people, especially in an environment where the morality of the common people has been very highly elevated. And pietism, of which we also had a lot, did not seem to be able to give us the guidance in Christian ethical living and choice in the social life of the new country. Therefore, in the course of the last few years Chinese Christians by their own path have come to know in greater fullness the Christ who is the Prophet, who is the Priest, who is the King. He is the Centre of history. His resurrection was a victory over sin, over death and over Satan, and he sits at the right hand of God as the Head of the Church and as the Lord of the world. We are now to see the world in a new light—in the light of His victory. And the



task of the Church is to proclaim His victory and to manifest His kingship. It is faith in this Christ which gives Christians the hope in its ultimate sense and also the strength for their pilgrimage and responsibilities in daily living.

Now to acknowledge this kingship of Christ does not imply that the Church is to struggle for earthly power and glory. I think one of the important lessons that Chinese Christians have learnt is how to enter into the mystery of the weakness of the Church. In the past the Church in China has been concerned with many relations, activities and institutions which do not have much direct meaning for evangelism. We were interested in the possession of power according to an earthly standard. After the Liberation, as we gave away crutches one by one, while in one way we felt as if we were losing a lot, actually we were being forced to ask ourselves: "What really is the essential thing?" In the past the Church has not been dependent only on the power of God and on the truth of the Gospel to bring men to repentance and to adherence to Christ. Today from a human standpoint the Church may look weaker, but this is a time when the Church is discovering that Christ's Grace is sufficient for us. The power of God is revealed the more fully in human weakness. We are reminded of the Church of Laodicea, which said: "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing". But Christ said to it, "thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked". On the other hand, He said to the Church in Smyrna, "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art rich". So before the Liberation some of the Christians in China had a miserable nervousness of "Church-saving"—of trying to save the Church, but we very nearly forgot that it is the Church that has to save men and not men the Church. As for the Church, its task is just to be itself, to abandon its will to power in the world in a wordly manner, in order to be itself, to gain strength in its weakness.

Now our Three-Self Movement is a movement which asks that the Church in China should be administered by Chinese Christians, should be supported financially by Chinese Christians, and should do its evangelistic work and maintain its life and work by Chinese Christians. The Three-Self Movement must be understood theologically. It is not a matter of political accommodation to any outside pressure, which does not exist. The Three-Self Movement is not a movement to exalt ourselves, as though we human beings are to supplant the position of Christ as Lord of the Church. The Three-

Self Movement is a movement of repentance and renewal. On the negative side it is a movement to pluck up, to destroy and to overthrow, but on the other hand it is a movement to build and to plant to make the Chinese Church truly itself.

I think the realization of the strength of the Church in the hand of Almighty God was a very important factor in our work of achieving financial independence. Of course there were many other factors which contributed; the cessation of inflation, for instance was a very important factor, and the general elevation of the standard of living of the common people and of the Christians is another. But the most important point is that self-support is a spiritual matter. It is not a question of getting together a group of church leaders who are financially minded, who can produce a blue-print to raise money. It is a spiritual task; it is a pastoral task to help our Christians to achieve a fuller ecclesiology, to love the Church and to have faith in the Church, and to love one's own congregation and, at the same time, to love other Christians' congregations. And indeed the Chinese Church in these years, after much difficulty, has been able to achieve self-support. Now I don't mean we have solved the question of self-support very satisfactorily yet. The livelihood of a number of our clergymen has still to be quite simple and ever meagre, but we can say today that the Chinese Church is being supported by Chinese Christians. And this is a spiritual and theological task no less than a question of financial planning.

Now concerning the relationship of the Church with our people of China. Of course the task of the Church is evangelism. Now in New China evangelism is still going on. In my own Diocese of Chekiang, the number of communicant members has increased from 5,977 in 1952 to 7,450 in 1955. In other words, the number of Christians has been increasing in the last few years at about the same speed as in the past. Now we have not wanted to dwell very much on this point. We have not wanted to capitalize on the increase in the number of Christians in the Churches in China because that fact should not give us any complacency. We know that today in New China, a very dynamic country where a new life is being built up all the time, evangelism as an effective Christian engagement with the world means something far deeper than our Christians have come to understand.

We have come to see that the Church in China in the past has been too greatly detached from the people. We have not identified

ourselves with the people. We have not loved them. Our attitude towards the common people in China was, and doubtless still is to some extent, too much like that of the Elder Brother or like that of the Prophet Jonah. We have not really loved them. To love the people is to help them, to understand them, to be sympathetic with them, to appreciate all the points of excellence in them; to love them is to put ourselves in their position and to understand their thinking and their feeling and to try to see why they in their position feel themselves justified in holding to their thinking and their feeling. Love does include all this. We have a very acute awareness that as Christians we have not truly loved our people. We pitied them perhaps, but we did not really love them. We have not been like Christ in his close identification with the people, because, as we remember in the Epistle to the Hebrews it says: "In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest. . . . For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted". And today if you come to China the Christians in China will be very eager to tell you how they are learning to love, to love our own people, not only because they are our own people, but because they are lovable, because they are children of God.

The third aspect is the relationship of the Chinese Churches with each other. One unfortunate thing which there was not time before the end of the missionary era to do away with, was the existence of barriers among the different denominations in China. During the last few years our various denominations have come to be closely associated with each other. We have not reached any church union; we are still separate bodies and the special characteristics of each have not been trespassed upon but have been respected. But the unity among the Churches in China today may be called a unity found as we seek in common the way of Christian obedience in New China. In the past the Churches would co-operate with each other only when absolutely necessary, but today separate undertakings will be resorted to only when absolutely necessary. In March this year the leaders of all the denominations in China, except the Roman Catholics, met in Peking for over a week, and I think that was the most representative conference of Christians in China which has ever been held.

The fourth aspect is the relationship of the Church with the State. In China the Communist Party is not only a legal, legitimate party;



it is the leading party; it is the party giving political leadership to the whole State. I regret that the Communists, who are extremely good and moral people, do not believe in God. But on the other hand I am rather glad that they are frankly atheistic, because their frank atheism is a guarantee somehow that they will not exploit religion as it has been exploited in history. All through history the powers that be have wanted to make use of religion to serve purposes unrelated to the Gospel, and the way to use it has always been to put on an appearance of religiosity. When Herod wanted to kill the infant Jesus he pretended that he wanted to come to worship Him.

I must leave the last moment to a word on the relation of the Church in China with Churches abroad. In the past it was mainly through the missionaries that the Churches in China maintained their contacts with Western Christians, and in the last few years most of the missionaries have gone; and the Chinese Christians had to pay all their attention to the task of the Church in the domestic scene, and therefore there has not been much contact between Christians in the West and those in China. But I do not think it is necessary for me to remind you that in our Three-Self Movement we are not against evangelism or against missionary work. What we have to be very careful and vigilant about is that the Church must be the Church itself. The Church must be careful not to be exploited by colonialism and by interests which have nothing to do with the Gospel. The three objects of the Three-Self Movement were in fact the goal of many of the missionaries who went to China and they have given a large contribution towards the achievement of that goal. Many of the missionaries went to China with the sole object of serving the Chinese people, the sole object of giving to the Chinese people the best thing they had—that is the Christian Gospel, and their good work is not forgotten. But I think they have every reason to be happy today now that the Church in China has in a preliminary way already achieved that goal. And if the Church does not have much of a self to speak of, what use is there in the Church in China going into the international assembly of Churches?

The Churches in China are not against contacts with Christians from abroad. In the last few years we have welcomed a Christian delegation from Great Britain—the Quakers, and they have been a great help to us. We have been able to welcome many Christians from Great Britain among the Youth Delegation, and a few months ago we had Bishop Manikam from India and Pastor Nystrom from

Sweden. We have had visits from Professor Hromadka of Czechoslovakia and Bishop Peter of Hungary, who spoke to our theological professors and students, and recently Bishop Hall of Hong Kong and Mrs. Hall came to visit the Church in China for more than three weeks. And with the gradual relaxation of the international situation and with the greater ability of Chinese Christians to divert a part of their attention from their domestic work in the Church to international opportunities and responsibilities, I think we may expect that such contacts will grow between Churches as Churches.

Now we still have many difficulties in our work in China which I do not have the time to enumerate. But we feel that God has put us in our situation and has led us in spite of our weakness. He has made us learn to be humble, to love our people, to identify ourselves with our people, to have an enthusiasm, to support the socialist experiment in our country, and also we feel it is a most worthwhile experience for the Church to exist in New China. And I want to thank you all for your prayers, which will still be needed, and also your thanksgivings on our behalf.

## A Cause for Christmas

The news is almost too good to be true that the St. Julian's Community are planning to open their house in Kenya before Christmas. Two members of the Community will already have left for Kenya before these words appear in print.

Miss Florence Allshorn, a former C.M.S. missionary in Uganda, who founded the Community in 1941, conceived St. Julian's as a house where men and women, worn down by the forces of spiritual disintegration and confusion, could refit themselves in quietness. She and the Community which grew up round her, were continually experimenting in the attempt to discover how the love of God, the love of one's neighbour, could be worked out in practical daily living under modern conditions. "There are no meetings and no conferences at St. Julian's; but there is atmosphere."

The house in Kenya is being started with strong encouragement from officials, settlers, missionaries and other Christians both black and white. It will be a place where people of all races and backgrounds may meet together to think and be quiet and rest, so that they may find strength and understanding for their tasks in life. All the work of the house will be done by members of the Community. Such a residential meeting place will be unique in East Africa, and its existence might unlock the door to a society where all races will be equally at home.

A house at Limuru, fifteen miles from Nairobi, has been purchased. The experience of St. Julian's in England makes it reasonable to suppose that the venture will be self-supporting from an early stage. Enough money has been already received to buy the house but more will be needed to equip it. Cheques should be sent to: The Treasurer, St. Julian's Trust, Coolham, Horsham, Sussex.

# Frontier Chronicle

## Foundations of Unity

From September eighth to fifteenth a group of about twenty lay people met in conference at Dunford College in Sussex for the purpose of trying to discover how ordinary lay people could help in laying the foundations for real Christian unity. They were a mixed bag drawn from several denominations, hailing from many districts, one from Australia, drawn from a variety of walks in life. Mature thinkers, over (some well over) the thirty-five-year mark, all active workers in church life, and speaking from experience thus gained. They were fully aware of the inertia which seemed to afflict large numbers of the members of local churches to whom disunity seemed to be no cause for sorrow. Little time was spent in bemoaning the existence of "grievous divisions", nor in reassuring one another that "in spite of different approaches they were really 'all one in Christ'." All this was, as it were, taken as read.

What lessons are to be learned from the ecumenical movement so far? The conference was fortunate in the presence of Dr. J. H. Oldham. From his lips came the moving story of progress since he and John R. Mott, of U.S.A., called a World Student Conference in the year 1895, on to the Edinburgh Missionary Conference, Faith and Order, on and on to Evanston 1954. Coming from the lips of Dr. Oldham it was not an old story told again, it was history re-lived. The Bishop of Chichester has designated John R. Mott and J. H. Oldham as two of the "Main Architects of the Movement". Architects perhaps, but as one listened to J. H. Oldham the comparison seemed

to be more with a prophet proclaiming the "Sure word of God" in a world of disunity and clashing ideas.

"The future will decide", said Dr. Oldham, "whether the ecumenical movement is important or unimportant". It is God's Will that it should be important, for the voice of the Church should be the "trumpet of the Lord" sounding the certain note of Righteousness, Truth and Love in the world today.

Kathleen Bliss, Janet Lacey and John Lawrence recounted their experiences in various parts of the world, telling the story of the Church behind the Iron Curtain and in the refugee camp. It was sometimes a heartening story, sometimes a sad story of frustration. But it was a story of a continual struggle for unity of action and of purpose. As one listened one realised how stern was the fight.

Then Mrs. Canadine told the story of Christian co-operation in Sussex. In many ways it was a story of worthy achievement at a local level, but Mrs. Canadine finished on an uneasy note and as she uttered it one felt conscious of fear. One envisaged crowds of ordinary church members, the laity, who had no vision, and no conception of God's purpose other than that which they saw through the narrow slit of denominationalism.

What was the Will of God for those whom He had called to the Conference? Generally the result of giving ecumenical "talks" to church people was a polite listening but "nothing doing". Perhaps the best thing to do was to gather a few members from varied local churches to pray, to study, to work together and



to venture forth in faith. Perhaps a local Council of Churches was too big a unit for real fellowship. Little groups, themselves a living example of unity in prayer and action, might be the necessary complement.

The Conference dispersed with the challenging words of Kathleen Bliss ringing in its ears.

"We are living on the frontier between the Church and the world.

But the Church is not over against the world. The world is not enemy territory. God loves the world, it is His and He made it, He gave His Son to save it. The eternal purpose of God is the Redemption of the World and the Mission of the Church is to carry out the purposes of God".

HARRY CROWE

### A Week-end Conference on Unity

The "Foundations of Unity" Conference at Dunford College, near Midhurst, in September, evidently met a widely felt need but many of those who would have liked to come were unable to spare a whole week. Kathleen Bliss and John Lawrence are, therefore, arranging a week-end conference at Dunford College beginning on the evening of Friday, 18th January. Dr. J. H. Oldham will

address the Conference, which is open to lay people of all churches.

The charge will be 45/- for three nights, plus 10/- registration fee, which should be sent to the Rev. R. G. Bliss, Dunford College, Midhurst, Sussex. Numbers will be limited to twenty. Dunford College is comfortable and well heated, and the food is excellent.

### A Little Evanston

The second Conference of Christian Churches in Sussex, a conference in the "Evanston tradition", was held at Bishop Otter College, Chichester, early in September. As the chairman, the Bishop of Chichester, said, it "marked a big step forward in friendly and happy relationships with one another and in understanding of each other's points of view".

There were about 140 delegates, both clerical and lay, representing many churches and many shades of churchmanship.

The guest speakers were the Rev. Hugh Martin, C.H., Chairman of the Executive of the British Council of Churches; and Canon C. K. Sansbury, Warden of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury. Their task was to help the delegates to see the Church in the setting of the New Testament and to lead the Conference on to study

the relevance of the New Testament to the present situation. A delegate from the Society of Friends said about the lectures "Plenty of 'meat' but not too tough for the theologically unqualified." But some of the lay delegates were a bit mystified. With this lead the delegates could and did discuss frankly the differences between them and were sometimes surprised that they were not so solid as they appeared. Many were late to bed on Saturday, having sat in groups of twos and threes, from assorted denominations. The degree of unity was most clearly seen during the Anglican Communion Service on the Sunday morning when members of the Anglican and Free Churches together recited the Nicene Creed and went to the Lord's Table.

On the last morning reports were given by ten local Christian councils

and inter-church committees. Many interesting ideas for inter-church co-operation and forms of united Christian witness were related. Only a few examples can be given. The Worthing Council of Churches supply speakers regularly to the science section of the High School, publish a visitors' guide to Worthing churches and maintain close liaison with the publicity department of the borough council. The Chichester Council of Churches has carried out a joint visitation of five out of the six city parishes, followed by guest services to bring in the lapsed. Crawley organises regular conferences with head teachers and has obtained space for a regular article in the local newspaper. Bognor Regis, among many other activities, has organised a remarkable joint pageant and has entrusted to the Baptists the task of holding services on the beach during

the holiday season. Bexhill has found that an open-air Sunday school is more successful than services on the beach. Southwick goes in for religious drama. In Billingham the parish magazine reserves space for other denominations. Eastbourne has organised a quiet day for clergy and ministers. At East Grinstead a newly formed Council of Churches has organised a public meeting on Inter Church Aid and the churches show each other the records of their visitation campaigns.

The Bishop, in summing up, said that the reported activities of the Councils were real evidence of something coming along on ecumenical lines which would not have happened a couple of years ago, much less ten or twenty years.

Members of the Conference asked for another "little Evanston" next year.

SYBIL CANADINE

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## The Next Frontier Luncheon

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The speaker at the Frontier Luncheon on the 13th November will be Miss Violet Markham (Mrs. James Carruthers). His subject will be "Technicians or Whole Human Beings."

Miss Markham looks back on a long and remarkably varied career and has held many public appointments. But no list of these could do justice to her personality.

Readers of the CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER will particularly remember her autobiography *Return Passage*, which was reviewed by Dr. J. H. Oldham in these pages.

The Chair will be taken by Mr. R. G. Stansfield, of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

The Luncheon will take place at 12.45 p.m. at the Y.M.C.A., 112 Gt. Russell Street, W.C.1.

# Tell It Out Among the Heathen

## THE CHRISTIAN POET TODAY

NORMAN NICHOLSON

The very fact that we have to use such a term as "Christian poet" shows something of the predicament in which that poet finds himself today. They didn't speak of "Christian poets" in the time of Chaucer, Skelton, Spenser, or Crabbe, yet all these were certainly Christians. Some poets, admittedly, could be called "devotional" because they wrote verse specifically concerned with religion. For the rest, they were men writing in a Christian civilization and a Christian context. Their faith was taken for granted, which in the majority of cases, is how it should be. It is the duty of the faith to mould the man rather than the poem. The poet should have his eye primarily on his work, and he is all the more likely to express his faith adequately and honestly if he is not thinking too much about it.

But this happy state of affairs can scarcely be obtained today. For the Christian who is sufficiently aware of himself and his age must know that his faith segregates him from society. It is not just that he believes what most people do not believe, but that his whole conception of the purpose of life is in contradiction to the aim and trend of the present-day world. So that the poet becomes self-conscious about his faith. He begins to calculate its possible effect on the reader. Will it predispose him towards the poetry or will it turn him against it? If he decides on the latter, then he may tend in self-defence to limit his potential audience, to address himself to his fellow Christians. On the other hand, he may try, like Mr. Auden, to conceal his Christianity, or, like Mr. Eliot, to disguise it in unfamiliar imagery. In a very few cases he may feel so much at home with his subject matter and so indifferent to his separation from popular trends that he can write easily and confidently without apparent reference to the beliefs he holds. Such a poet is Canon Andrew Young, and in this sense one may say that he is practically the only true Christian poet writing today—in the sense, that is, in which the term might have been, but wasn't, applied to Chaucer, Skelton, Spenser, and Crabbe. For other contemporary poets there is no such solution. Like the early Christians they are living in an alien world and they can never forget it. Inevitably, though often against their will, they become propagandist in their poetry.



When, therefore, we discuss "Modern Christian poetry" we are forced to discuss it as propaganda. We are forced, that is, to discuss the manner in which it proclaims the Christian faith and the method by which it adjusts itself to its audience. But first we must remember that Christianity is not the only religion which finds itself in an alien world. Present-day heathendom does not run after strange gods; it runs after no gods at all. Materialism—the belief that matter alone has reality—is opposed not just to Christianity but to all forms of religious thinking. So that it is not surprising that some of the most powerful counter-attacks come from outside Christianity. One thinks immediately of D. H. Lawrence and Dylan Thomas, though it would be difficult to define the beliefs of either. Thomas said of his poems that they were "written for the love of Man and in praise of God, and I'd be a damn' fool if they weren't". But what he meant by "God" is hard to guess. It is not hard to guess what he meant by "praise", and his poems like those of Lawrence, are full of a joyous acceptance of life and a sense of wonder in the natural world.

The counter-attack to materialism as presented in the poetry of Lawrence and Dylan Thomas did not really move beyond the world of matter. It offered a kind of pantheism without Pan; matter was not "materialist", but it was still no more than matter. There is another form of counter-attack, however, in which the very existence of matter is denied or brought into doubt. The world of nature and the sense and human experience is regarded as a flux, an illusion, a mere symbol for the world of the spirit. Such would seem to be the thought behind the very lovely poems of Miss Kathleen Raine—though I am probably guilty of over-simplification and perhaps of distortion. In any case Miss Raine has shown sufficient belief in the existence of external nature to have trained as a biologist. She was, for a time, a Roman Catholic, but in her *Collected Poems* she has rejected practically all the verse written under the influence of the Church. Yet in her work as in that of Mr. David Gascoyne, there is a deep sense of the divine humanity as revealed in the personality of Our Lord. This is poetry like that of Blake, which has a piercing understanding of certain aspects of Christian faith while repudiating others. Christians should accept the understanding with gratitude, though it would be dangerous to overlook the importance of the repudiation. To deny the reality of matter is to make nonsense of the Incarnation and of the sacraments. Christianity is one of the most materialist of religions. It holds that matter matters.

Whatever new problems may face the Christian poet, his first function as a propagandist (as distinct, of course, from his function as a poet, which is purely and simply to write good poetry) is to re-state the Christian faith in the language and imagery of our time. This can be done in many ways. Mr. John Short, in his delightful *Carol*, brings the Birth at Bethlehem into close relation with our own world merely by the use of one geographical reference:

“He was not dropped in good-for-lambing weather,  
He took no suck when shook buds sing together,  
But he is come in cold-as-workhouse weather,  
Poor as a Salford child”.

Mr. T. S. Eliot, in *The Journey of The Magi*, does not use a single modern reference, yet he makes the visit of the Wise Men sound as if it had taken place yesterday. It is the language, here, and the easy conversational rhythm which give the effect of contemporaneity:

“Then the camel men cursing and grumbling  
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women . .  
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly  
And the villages dirty and charging high prices  
A hard time we had of it”.

There were other poets (among whom, with doubtful justification, I might count myself) who have transplanted episodes from the Bible into a modern setting: the events of the Pentateuch are re-enacted in an empty church; Elijah prays for rain in a Cumberland dale; the Nativity takes place in a shadow factory. It is a method made more familiar by pictorial art than by poetry, from the painters of the Italian Renaissance to Stanley Spencer of today. There are others who have taken the traditional Christian teaching on certain aspects of human behaviour and applied it specifically to the circumstances of today. What Mrs. Anne Ridler has to say about marriage, for instance, is not very different from what Christians have had to say about it throughout the ages—except in times when there was a puritanical or Manichean attitude to sex. But Mrs. Ridler's poems take on a special significance and poignancy for the modern reader because they speak of loss and separation in terms of the war and post-war world.

In all these cases, however, the Christian poet is speaking primarily to the reader who is also Christian. In them the basic and urgent problem of how to tell it out among the heathen has not yet been tackled. It has been tackled with enormous success, however, in the

later plays of Mr. Eliot. In *The Cocktail Party* the necessity for renunciation and the purposefulness of human failure are put forward as if in the terms of psychology. In *The Confidential Clerk* a lesson in humility is given in the form of farce—not inappropriately, since the banana skin has always been a trap for pride. The Christian message is presented in disguise, so that the audience accepts it without recognizing it for what it is.

In *The Four Quartets* the method is different. I do not think that Mr. Eliot would object if I were to say that there is scarcely a single original thought in the whole of this sequence of poems. Originality, in fact, would be out of place; would be almost impertinent. Instead, the poet has taken musings and explorations into Christian doctrine and morality and has woven them into a living pattern. The result is poetry of a high order, not because of the ideas expressed, but because of the way these ideas press one against the other, flow one into the other, image fertilising image until new meanings seed and root and flower in the mind. Here, Mr. Eliot does not “disguise” his faith, his references are quite uncompromisingly Christian. He quotes St. John of the Cross and presents the central paradox of Christian morality—that we must die in order to live, that we must be born again in order to enter the Kingdom of God—in the stark metaphor of a hospital:

“Our only health is the disease  
If we obey the dying nurse  
Whose constant care is not to please  
But to remind of our, and Adam’s curse,  
And that, to be restored, our sickness must grow worse”.

But the effect of all this on the non-Christian reader (which is what, at the moment, we are considering) is not a surfeit of Christian teaching, instead, he hears echoes of other religions and philosophies—the fertility cults of primitive tribes, the mediaeval conception of the nature of matter, a hint of Buddhism, all bound together by brightly decorative imagery drawn from the countryside and the seasons. And in this way he is made to realise what a great deal Christian thinking has in common with other cultures and even with the half-intuitive hopes and predispositions of his own mind. The poem does not try to persuade him to accept Christianity; it reveals to him how much of it he had not rejected. Yet, though there is greater wisdom and art in the *Quartets*, they do not show the same startling imaginative insight as did *The Waste Land*.



It is generally presumed that *The Waste Land* was written before Mr. Eliot had come to accept the Christian faith, yet in many ways it is one of the most profoundly Christian poems of our time. It is true that the attitude which it presents is incompletely Christian—it is the Christianity, say, of Easter Saturday rather than that of Easter Sunday. The poet sees the Christian faith not so much as a means of salvation but as an ironic indictment of twentieth-century civilization.

For the structure of his poem Mr. Eliot had turned to the mediaeval legends of the Holy Grail, and in doing so gave a valuable hint to his successors. Charles Williams, for instance, sought his material among the Arthurian legends; Mr. Auden wrote a memorable series of sonnets on the Fall; others turned to non-Biblical mythology. Myth became the common ground on which Christian and non-Christian could converse. The Garden of Eden, the Fall, the Flood, the Exodus, the Exile—these were seen to have a universal significance which could be perceived and acknowledged by those who did not accept the Christian doctrines. Many poets attempted this mytho-poetic writing, with varying success, but one deserves special mention: Dr. Edwin Muir. Dr. Muir did not write as a Christian. His explorations into the Old Testament myths began from no clearly defined position, but it brought him so near to the Christian verities that he himself accepted the consequences and confessed himself a Christian. (A curious parallel with Dr. Muir may be seen in Mr. Samuel Becket. It is unlikely, to judge from Mr. Becket's other work, that the conscious ideas behind *Waiting For Godot* were in any way Christian. In any probability the author intended to present an entirely sceptical and even hopeless picture of the human situation. Yet the effect of the play is by no means hopeless, and many readers have felt that its implications are quite astonishingly close to the fundamental assumptions of the Christian faith. Dr. Muir, one might say, against his expectations, convinced himself; Samuel Becket, against his intentions, convinced others).

Speaking of dogma, Dr. Muir has said:

"The Word made flesh is here made word again";

and also;

"The fleshless word, growing, will bring us down".

So that, obviously, it would be tactless to demand of him too precise definition of his point of view. Nevertheless, his poetry is a magnificent example of the power of Christian myth to speak direct to the

human imagination and so to by-pass the obstacles and impediments which are set up against more explicit statements of belief.

I have spoken of the Christian poet as if he were all the time consciously and deliberately setting out to preach, to explain, to persuade, though I am sure that all the poets mentioned would repudiate this intention, as, indeed, I should myself. Yet consideration of this propagandist aspect of poetry may help the reader to understand some of the problems of communication which arise when Christian poets try to speak to a non-Christian world. The truth, however, is that there are no "Christian poets"; there are only Christians who happen to be poets. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and makes no inquiries about a man's creed. In the end it is the good poetry alone which will survive, and we may be thankful that, in our own day, a considerable proportion of what seems to be good comes from men and women who profess and practise the Christian faith.

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## Inflation and Economic Responsibility

J. F. SLEEMAN

In their concern for social responsibility, Christians have been less clear about their economic responsibility. Christian thinking and action has rightly been prominent in seeking social justice, in the fight against the evils of poverty, unemployment, ignorance, squalor and disease, and in trying to secure decent housing and working conditions, proper education and health services for all. The question of how the community gets its living has received less attention. Christians have not concerned themselves enough with such questions as why people work, what sorts of goods and services ought to be produced and in what quantities, how production is to be organized to secure economic efficiency as well as social justice, or how we as a nation are to pay our way in the world. Even the Christian sociologists, who have done so much to call our attention to the human problems of an industrial society, have not given much attention to the economic issues involved.

Why this neglect of economics? Partly because economic questions have been thought of as too technical and complicated for the non-

specialist. Partly because of a feeling, especially among some of the Christian sociologists, that economists are too limited and materialistic in their assumptions, not sufficiently aware of human and spiritual factors, and that therefore what they have to say about the working of society is unlikely to be of value to the Christian. Because classical economics developed with a utilitarian background, therefore there has been a tendency to overlook the economic problem itself. This has been the more true because of habits of mind bred in the days of unemployment and great inequality in incomes. There was a tendency in the 'thirties, for instance, to feel that the problem of production was solved and that all that was needed was to distribute more fairly a product big enough to meet any calls on it. This was natural enough in the days when resources were lying idle and when there was still scope for more redistribution through higher taxes on the rich to pay for social services. It is obviously untenable today when we cannot export enough to pay our way and when we are acutely aware of the extreme poverty of most of the world outside the favoured Western countries.

Our present problem of inflation is one of the best illustrations of the results of this lack of concern with economics. True, the inflation of recent years is partly due to what we may call "outside" factors, such as the continued high level of world trade and the heavy spending by most Governments on defence. It is also, however, largely the unexpected result of the social aims and policies which most of us have striven for in the past.

In the first place, there is the aim of full employment. It is true that the maintenance of full employment since the war has been a by-product of other factors rather than an achievement of deliberate policy. Yet at the same time, because of our experience of the evils of heavy unemployment in the 'twenties and 'thirties, there has been an anxiety among all concerned to avoid any danger of a recurrence, which has made us ready to put up with a fair measure of inflation, rather than take any action which may lead to even a slight increase of unemployment. So we have become accustomed to an average of 1 to 1½ per cent, as against the minimum of 3 per cent which Beveridge thought to be practicable, and the 4 per cent minimum which is quite happily accepted in the United States; yet the number of unfilled vacancies greatly exceeds the numbers looking for jobs. We are tempted to feel that full employment must mean, not that there are jobs available for everyone who is seeking one, but rather that everyone



should be guaranteed permanent employment in his present place of work. In the face of such attitudes, any effective policy to deal with inflation becomes politically very difficult.

Along with full employment has gone a more equal distribution of incomes. This is partly the result of full employment itself, leading as it does through its effects on bargaining power to a levelling up and down of the actual rates of pay of unskilled, and semi-skilled workers, skilled craftsmen, clerical and professional workers of various grades. It is also the result of higher and more progressive taxation, coupled with increased expenditure on the social services. This again is one of the aims of social policy which most of us have supported, but once again it has produced its problems. With more equal incomes, those who now have more tend to consume more, while those who now have less tend to save less. We are therefore constantly trying to consume a bigger share of our national product than we can afford to do, at the expense of our exports, while tending not to save enough to provide resources for investment in improving our productive capacity. More equal incomes thus accentuate the problem of inflation.

It has long been an ideal of social reformers that poverty might some day be abolished. In spite of the difficulties of old age pensioners and others with small fixed incomes, this has largely been achieved to-day. Poverty, in the sense of real destitution, as it was known even in the 'thirties, has virtually disappeared from Britain. But in the process we have all become more accustomed to the ideal of a higher and rising standard of living. We are all either striving to secure the comforts and pleasures which we feel to be coming into reach, or else we are trying to preserve our living standards from the threat of rising prices, or from the competition of those groups over which we have in the past enjoyed an advantage. Hence all groups are constantly seeking for higher incomes, partly to protect themselves from the rising cost of living, but partly also to ensure the living standard to which they feel themselves entitled. And with full employment they can usually get the extra money.

Hence the familiar spiral of rising prices and rising wages and salaries in which we are all involved. It is the more difficult to see any easy way out of this, in that we also believe in free collective bargaining. It has come to be accepted that each profession or trade or group of workers is free to decide for itself how much it will seek to gain in the way of increased pay from its employers, without much thought for the effect of its claims on the position of other groups, or on the

economy as a whole. This also is one of our cherished ideals and it has much to be said for it as a bulwark of democratic freedom and as a means to harmonious industrial relations. Strong and free trade unions and professional associations are obviously essential in an age when the trend is towards greater centralization both of political and economic power, and it is difficult to work out any form of "national wages policy" which preserves their strength. Nevertheless, experience has shown us that what the *Economist* called the "uneasy triangle" of full employment, free collective bargaining and stable prices cannot be maintained without some compromise. So far it is stable prices which have given way.

Thus we have achieved many of the ideals for which we strove in the 'thirties. We now have full employment, a more equal distribution of incomes and a comprehensive system of social services. We have, at least temporarily, virtually abolished primary poverty, we have attained a higher standard of living for the bulk of our people, and at the same time we have maintained and strengthened free collective bargaining. But in the process we have created inflation. We are living slightly above our means, consuming rather more than we can afford, so that we are in danger of not being able to pay our way in the world. If this goes on, we may have drastically to cut down our imports, or even devalue the £ once more. Meanwhile we are not investing enough in increasing the future productivity of the industrial equipment on which we depend for a living, particularly in basic fields such as fuel supply and road and rail transport. Moreover the fact that we cannot be certain of securing a surplus each year on our current balance of payments means that we, one of the richest nations in the world, cannot afford to play our full part in helping other countries less well-off than ourselves in their much needed development.

This experience of ours suggests the dangers of ignoring the fundamental economic issues which underlie our social aims. This is a field in which Christians ought to have something to offer, since although we call these questions economic, they are moral questions too, for they involve human conduct and human choices.

Let us consider first the question of productivity. We are constantly being told that higher productivity is essential, and our managements and workers are being criticized for not being prepared to co-operate in securing it. But what is it that makes men work conscientiously and efficiently? Is the reward of higher earnings enough, or do they need something which makes more appeal to their imaginations and ideal-

ism? At present the forces of loyalty and the sense of belonging to a group, which do so much to give meaning to daily work, are largely directed towards the protection of the "workers' " interests, conceived of as being in opposition to those of the management. How far is such a conflict inevitable? Can there be a sense of common purpose strong enough to overcome it? Obviously, mere vague appeals to work harder for the sake of the country have little meaning for most people, at any rate in the complex circumstances of peace time.

But the responsibility on managements is even greater, and not enough thought has been given to it. What makes for really efficient, imaginative management? Is it merely a matter of the incentive effect of higher profits or higher salaries for top managers, and is it therefore high taxation which acts as a disincentive? Or is there more to it than that; the pride and satisfaction of building up a successful plant or firm, for instance?

We don't yet know the answers to questions of this sort, although there has been a good deal of research on the part of industrial psychologists, sociologists, students of labour relations and writers of entrepreneurial history, directed towards trying to find out. Surely as Christians we ought to have more to say about these things.

Then there are the wider issues of the ideals of society as a whole. Mr. Butler has given us the aim of a doubling of our standard of living in twenty-five years. Quite apart from the question of whether, and how, this is to be achieved, the acceptance of such an ideal raises profound theological questions. What do we really mean by a "higher standard of living"? Have we given too much support to the ideal of higher material standards, in the sense of cars and television sets for all, and not shown forth clearly, or attractively enough, in the life of the Church, what truly worth-while living standards are like? We profess to believe in a "more abundant life". Why don't our fellow countrymen find it more attractive? How far is it true that we need the incentive of higher material standards, to make possible economic growth and greater efficiency? Our economy must grow and develop if we are to pay our way in the world. We must constantly be developing new lines of production, making new things and making them more cheaply and of better quality, so that others will buy from us. Can we do this unless our industrialists and workers, and all who take part in the productive process, both directly and indirectly, can expect in return to enjoy the fruits of a higher living standard?

And yet over a short period we need to restrain our consumption



and save more, if inflation is to be checked. Ought we Christians to give a lead by increasing our saving at present? How far are we doing so? How far can we do so, and if we don't, why don't we? How can people be persuaded to save at a time when money is losing its value? In the last century, thrift was stressed as a Christian virtue, as well as being a valuable source of capital for industry. In the 'thirties, in face of general depression, it became unpopular. Is it possible to inculcate an attitude that regards thrift as desirable during inflationary periods, while encouraging spendthriftness during times of deflation, in the approved Keynesian style?

But the problem goes deeper than that, for the economies of Western Europe, at least, seem to have lost the dynamic which inspired them in the last century. We do not have any clear idea of what our economy is for, of what we are trying to achieve. We have not the same belief in unlimited material expansion which still seems to provide an effective dynamic in the United States, nor the sense of building a new order which the rulers of the Soviet Union have managed to inspire, in spite of their coercive methods.

What about the part that Britain ought to be playing in the world? There is a growing realization nowadays of the position of the less fortunate parts of the world, in which two-thirds of mankind still lives. The needs of these countries, for financial help to start off the process of development, and for the machinery and equipment and the technical skills which go with it, form a challenge to us which we cannot continue to ignore. Is it possible that this might go some way towards supplying the missing dynamic? It might be so, if our people could be brought to see that helping the people of Asia and Africa to help themselves is an objective which is worth while, something which we as a rich nation ought to be doing, something to encourage us to give of our best.

Does this sound fantastic? Perhaps it does at present, when we cannot even be certain of paying our way ourselves, let alone having anything over to give to others. But that merely reminds us that our present plight, where all our hopes have turned to inflation, is a challenge to us to take our economic problems seriously. They need to be studied on just as fundamental a level as the social questions with which Christians are more at home.

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# Book Reviews

## Human, All Too Human

*Russia Without Stalin.* Edward Crankshaw. (Michael Joseph. 18s.)

The Russia in which I have lived is so different from the Russia that people generally talk about and write about that I have sometimes wondered whether my memory has not deceived me. Have I not imagined my own Russia where human beings are even more human than elsewhere, where the contradictions of everyday human feelings are not hidden by conforming behaviour? Is not the abstract Russia which Westerners fear or admire the true reality after all? Such doubts vanish at the first contact with Soviet Russians but in the years when there was no contact between us it was not

easy to be sure that Russia was what one remembered it to be and not what most other people said it was.

Edward Crankshaw's book is about the real Russia. So it is surprising and contradictory but it is not difficult to understand if you bring sympathetic imagination to the task. There is an American saying that a friend is a man who knows you and likes you all the same. Edward Crankshaw's greatest qualification to write about the Russians is that he knows all their faults and peculiarities and yet he likes them, or rather he loves them. He brings to his study of Russia just that imaginative insight



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and realistic sympathy which ought to distinguish Christians. But he is not a Christian. He is too sensitive not to respect the beliefs of others but he is repelled by most of historic Christianity. He is horrified by the mediaeval piety at the shrine of St. Sergius. "In a dark corner by the image of the Saint a youngish priest of extreme greasiness gabbles away at the Holy office, paying no attention to the old women who seize the hem of his habit and kiss it. Little groups of women will suddenly, two or three at a time, set up a new chant, which, swelling, floats above the dark and noisome scene like a visitation from another world. . . . God is in that pit, in the stink, the sweet music, the groaning genuflexions". The last words are written in irony but they may be truer than their author knows. A page or two later he comments "Few things strike me as more odd than the concern shown by cultured and delicate-minded Christians in the West for the survival of the dark superstitions of the Russian faithful and the sleek, cynical opportunism of the Russian Orthodox priesthood". But if only he could see Christianity from inside as he sees Russian from inside, Mr. Crankshaw would find himself unexpectedly at home. For the paradoxes of the Christian faith have a resemblance to the paradoxes of Russian life.

Mr. Crankshaw's method of description is artistic rather than logical but nothing is left out. A section of Russian youth is enthusiastic, but enthusiastic for what? Another section produces Teddy boys, wasters and "hooligans" ordinary Russians are as kind as ever to drunks and beggars, thereby dragging strict party members. The planned economy only works thanks to an army of contact men or

"fixers" who break every regulation. Plans are made but not carried out, yet somehow things get done. The Russian leaders are all real human beings grappling with real and very baffling problems. And all is illustrated with comic drawings from the *Crocodile* and translated articles from the Soviet press.

Here are some of Mr. Crankshaw's conclusions: "If the effect is one of confusion then I have done what I have set out to do. Because Russia is in ferment, and nobody in the world can tell what shape her society or her policies will gradually assume as the ferment subsides. The new leadership is not operating in a vacuum. It is bound up inextricably with the vast and polyglot land, now on the threshold of the final and transforming stage of its industrial revolution, which it is trying to govern. . . . Russia will always be socialist in some shape or form, but not necessarily in the Marxist form. . . . Russia will always be messianic, seeking to convert the world to her own way of thought by whatever means come to hand. And the Russians as people will continue to combine bleak and shameless cynicism with boundless freedom of mind and imagination. Russia, as far as anyone can see ahead, will always be a problem." And finally, "But now . . . I think that society is settling down into a long spell of more or less steady evolution. I think Soviet society has grown stronger than the men who helped Stalin to fashion it; that these are no longer in absolute control, and, to keep their power, are being compelled to move with the times." And that is what I think, too. Mr. Crankshaw may be wrong but no one should dismiss his view without reading *Russia Without Stalin*.

J. W. L.



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**Contemporary Philosophy**

Frederick Copleston, S.J. (Burns &amp; Oates. 18s.)

Outside the Roman Catholic Church, in which the dominant philosophical school is still that of Thomist scholasticism, the two most vigorous philosophical movements of the present day are the linguistic empiricism which is the heir of the logical positivism of the nineteen-thirties and the existentialism which derives from Kierkegaard and of which the typical contemporary representatives are Heidegger, Jaspers and Sartre. It is significant that for the most part the followers of either of these movements have very little use for the followers of the other. To the typical linguistic empiricist, such as Professors Ayer and Ryle, the existentialists are more like witch-doctors than philosophers and they are more to be valued as interesting objects for study by psychologists and anthropologists than as thinkers in their own right. To the typical existentialist, on the other hand, whether he is of the theistic or the atheistic type, the linguistic empiricists are escapists babbling away in an ivory castle and totally out of touch with the real problems of human living. It is, therefore, perhaps even more significant that the sympathetic and penetrating work which is now before us and which takes with complete seriousness both these movements has been written by someone who belongs to neither, but who is a representative of the Thomist scholasticism, which both of them reject as outmoded and superficial, albeit of that somewhat loosely created Thomist scholasticism which characterizes the Society of Jesus rather than the Order of Preachers.

Fr. Copleston is Professor of

Philosophy at the Jesuit College of Heythrop and also lectures at the Pontifical Gregorian University at Rome. Most of the chapters of his book consist of articles which have previously appeared in periodicals, but they fit together smoothly and compose a coherent and adequate survey of their subject, whose main purpose is to vindicate the traditional position of Christian philosophy that it is possible for the human mind to acquire a rational knowledge of God.

In the first part of the book, the author's main concern is to examine and assess the various forms of the famous verification principle, the principle that no utterances can be statements about matters of fact unless they are verifiable by sense-experience, at least in principle, and to vindicate the traditional Christian respect for metaphysics. In doing this, he courageously grasps and draws the sting of the positivist's initial assertion, the assertion that there is something very odd about utterances which purport to be assertions about God. This, he maintains, is bound to be the case, since God is *ex hypothesi* unique, but he shows that to say that they are odd is not to say that they are meaningless.

The existentialist movement, which is the subject of the second part of the book, is a much less tightly knit thing than is linguistic empiricism. There might, indeed, seem to be little in common between theistic existentialists such as Kierkegaard, Jaspers and Marcel and atheistic existentialists such as Heidegger and Sartre, and very little in common between the members of either of these sub-

groups. What unites them, however, is the conviction that man's fundamental problem is not abstract speculation but concrete human living; and Fr. Copleston's main concern here is to demonstrate that an intellectual conviction of the existence of God, so far from leading a man away from real life into a pallid realm of abstractions, is in fact the necessary foundation of any full-blooded engagement in concrete

personal activity which is not to end up in scepticism and frustration.

Space will not permit of any detailed examination of Fr. Copleston's arguments, but enough should have been said to make it plain that his book is one which both professional philosophers and intelligent non-experts alike will read with interest and profit.

E. L. MASCALL.

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## BOOKS RECEIVED

*Mention in this list neither implies nor precludes subsequent notice.*

- An Historian's Approach to Religion.* Arnold Toynbee. (O.U.P., 21s.)
- Strengthening the Spiritual Life.* Nils F. S. Ferré. (Collins, 6s.)
- Christianity and Communication.* F. S. Dillistone. (Collins, 12s. 6d.)
- Drum: A Venture into the New Africa.* A. Sampson. (John Lane, 16s.)
- Russia Without Stalin.* Edward Crankshaw. (Joseph, 18s.)
- The Social Thought of the World Council of Churches.* Edward Duff. (Longmans, 25s.)
- The Walled Garden.* Hugh Ross Williamson. (Michael Joseph, 15s.)
- Christian Theology and Natural Science.* E. L. Mascall. (Longmans, 25s.)
- The Twelve Together.* T. Ralph Morton. (Iona Community, 7s. 6d.)
- The Diary of a Country Priest.* George Bernanos. (Collins, 2s. 6d.)
- Religion and the Christian Faith.* Hendrik Kraemer. (Lutterworth, 45s.)
- The Springs of Morality.* Ed. John M. Todd. (Burns and Oats, 30s.)
- Freud and Religious Belief.* H. L. Philp. (Rockliff, 18s.)
- St. Luke's Life of Christ.* Translated by J. B. Phillips, illustrated by Edward Ardizzone. (Collins, 12s. 6d.)
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